



MS Gulf Coast's most
UNWANTED
 Plants & Animals



**STOP AQUATIC
 HITCHHIKERS!**

Prevention, early detection and rapid response are widely recognized as the best and most cost-effective way of controlling invasive species

Asian tiger shrimp (*Penaeus monodon*) can be easily identified by the distinctive dark and light "tiger" striping pattern on the shell and their large size. Growing to almost a pound in weight, tiger shrimp are aggressive predators of native shrimp and crabs. These new arrivals potentially bring exotic diseases that could be detrimental to the shrimping industry.



Asian Tiger Shrimp



Chinese Tallow

Chinese tallow (*Triadaca sebifera*) trees have simple, smooth green leaves that produce brilliant fall colors and green seeds that ripen to resemble popped corn. Chinese tallow are noted for their rapid spread into disturbed areas. These new infestations turn into dense monoculture forests that eliminate habitat and food for native species.

Infestations of Giant applesnail (*Pomacea maculata*) can strip lakes and marshes of all aquatic vegetation. These voracious plant-eaters start small but can grow to the size of a baseball. Active mainly at night, giant applesnails are detected by the clusters of bright pink eggs they deposit just above the waterline.



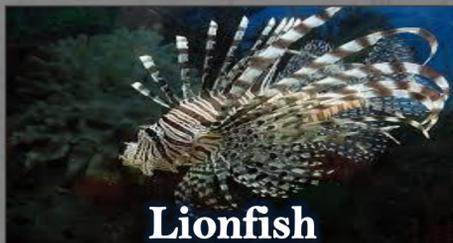
Giant Apple Snail



Alligator Weed

Alligatorweed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*) is an aquatic plant that roots along shallow shorelines and grows out to cover the surface with floating mats. Recognizable by its narrow long leaves and white flowers, dense mats of alligatorweed can impede navigation and fishing as well as reduce oxygen levels in the water.

Indopacific lionfish (*Pterois* sp.) are voracious super predators with venomous spines. Declines in reef fish populations of 80% have been observed following a single lionfish introduction. Females release two million eggs per year that spread freely with the ocean current as they develop into hungry larvae ready to infest their new location.



Lionfish



Water Hyacinth

Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) is a free-floating aquatic plant recognizable by its thick glossy leaves and lavender flower spikes. This noxious invader grows up to three feet tall and forms thick mats halting boat traffic and causing fish-killing oxygen depletions. Water hyacinth reproduces by runners and seeds and can double its population every two weeks.

Wild hogs (*Sus scrofa*) are one of the most destructive creatures on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. They are known predators of sea turtle nests and ground nesting birds. Their rooting and wallowing erodes coastal marshes, damages crops and decreases water quality. This soil disturbance increases opportunity for colonization by invasive plants.



Wild Hogs



Cogon Grass

Cogon grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) can be identified by its satiny flower plumes and leaf blades that appear to rise straight from the ground with no stem. This highly invasive plant forms dense stands that crowd out native plant and animal species. Cogon grass infestations first appear as circular patches that can merge into larger continuous areas.

Nutria (*Myocaster coypus*) are large semi-aquatic rodents from South America with a high rate of reproduction. They cause loss of coastal marsh areas by feeding on the native plants that hold wetland soils together. Nutria burrows also weaken dams and the banks of ditches and lakes increasing soil erosion.



Nutria



Salvinia

Giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) and common salvinia (*Salvinia minima*) are similar-looking free floating invasive aquatic ferns with small oblong leaves with fine white hairs on the surface. They form dense mats that choke out native aquatic life and impede navigation. Salvinia reproduces by fragmentation and can spread by hitchhiking on watercraft or aquatic animals.

Do your part to help stop these invaders!

- Don't plant pests
- Prevent hitchhiking
- Don't transport possibly contaminated objects like firewood
- Don't release live plants or animals into the wild



Beach Vitex

South Pacific Beach vitex (*Vitex rotundifolia*) is a fast-growing woody vine that can reach 60 feet in length and 2 feet in height. Also known as "Kudzu of the Coast," aggressive infestations engulf dunes and sea turtle and shorebird nest sites.

ENHANCE ★ PROTECT ★ CONSERVE

Report Invasive Species

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